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Main works-

A saga of Sacrifices: Praja Parishad Movement in J&K

100 Documents: A reference book J&K, Mission Accomplished

A Compendium of Icons of Jammu & Kashmir & our Inspiration (English)

Jammu Kashmir ki Sangarsh Gatha (Hindi)

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Political Movements in Jammu and Kashmir : An appraisal of  
Kraja Parishad Movement in 1952-1953

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POLITICAL MOVEMENTS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR : AN

APPRAISAL OF PRAJA PARISHAD MOVEMENT OF 1952 - 1953

By: Prof. Vidya Bhushan\*

The serious economic depression and tensions and turmoil in socio-political-economic senerio of the World in general and in third world in particular in mid 20th century gave rise to the frustration, deprivation, dissatisfaction, disappointment and alienation among their masses. All this resulted not only the rise of state of statelessness particularly among their younger generations, emergence of aggressive and agitated groups who believed in violence and violent radical movements, but also in the disturbance of peace and normalacy. The political movements, which meam an organised attempt on the part of a section of a society to bring about either partial or total change in it through collective mobilization based on ideology, have, thus, become central concern of almost all contemporary scientists and statesmen. The same is also true in case of India as well as in Jammu and Kashmir state, which is one of the federating units of Indian federal polity.

However, the establishment of a popular government in Jammu and Kashmir way back in 1947 ushered a new era of hopes for peace and prosperity among the masses of all the three regions of the state. But the subsequent administrative, politico - Constitutional and economic



developments in the state had created various doubts - real or imaginary - in the minds of the people particularly of Jammu region about the bonafide of the Kashmiri leadership. They started raising fingers even against the most desirable and progressive politico-economic reforms made by the popular government viz. grant of fixity of tenures to the tenants in respect of tenancy holdings, fixation of the maximum rental payable to his landlord, providing for summary reinstatement of the tenant, who had been wrongfully ejected; restitution of mortgaged properties; Relief to the distrust debtors; Abolition of Jagirs, Mufais and Mukararies; The Big Landed Estates' Abolition Act of 1950 etc. etc. The first outburst of such political movements against the popular government in the State since independence was witnessed in 1952 i.e. the Praja Parishad movement.

However, the all Jammu and Kashmir Praja Parishad, being essentially a reaction to the aggressive trends in the local nationalism of Kashmir, a protest of a region which felt politically ignored and condemned,<sup>1</sup> result of regional nationalism, a regional and a largely Hindu dominated party was found<sup>2</sup> in 1947. Hindu Dogras had a sense of insecurity as a minority community in the State representing their apprehensions, Praja Parishad sought security in the retention of the Institution of the Maharaja as a Constitutional head of the State. For the



same reason they favoured closer ties between the State and Indian Union and abrogation of Article 370 which conferred a Special Status on the State. It rejected, outrightly a separate Constituent Assembly<sup>3</sup>, separate emblem and separate flag for the state and the Institution of Sadar-i-Rayasat and demanded the application of Indian Constitution in its entirety,<sup>4</sup> like Jana Sangh, its policy too was influenced by the ideology of AKHAND BHARAT and regarded the accession of the State to the Union as final, complete, legally valid and beyond question.<sup>5</sup> The Party believed in the concept of India as a strong Unitary State.<sup>6</sup>

In other words the party was said to be a forum of communal interests, regional discontent, frustration, deprivation and a combination of regional pride, a protest against arbitrary rule, of those who had a sense of insecurity about the future of the State and who had outrightly opposed the very idea of Kashmir state being an autonomous state based on the right of self-determination.

The Party which had previously criticised the convening of Consenbly to draft separate constitution for the state decided to contest the elections and demanded representation in Delimitation Committee.<sup>7</sup> Soon after the party leadership charged the National Conference and its Government of commission of malafide tactics,<sup>8</sup> ~~and dubious methods~~



number of irregularities<sup>9</sup> and dubious methods<sup>10</sup> in Jammu Elections and gave an ultimatum<sup>11</sup> and ultimately boycotted the elections under protest.<sup>12</sup> This gave rise to the Parishad war cry:

Ek Desh do Vidhan - In one country two Constitutions  
Ek Desh men do Nishan - In one country two flags;  
Ek Desh men do Pradhan - In one country two Prime  
Ministers;

Nahin Chalengay! Nahin Chalengay - will not be tolerated<sup>13</sup>

A minor incident over the protest of a few students against hoisting a National Conference Flag in G.G.M. Science College on January 15, 1952<sup>14</sup> touched off the conflagration. The incident led to penalisation of the students<sup>15</sup> Students hunger strike.<sup>16</sup> Violence,<sup>17</sup> Police lathi charge, firing,<sup>18</sup> partial paralisation of administrative machinery in Jammu city, intervention of the Military and imposition of 72 hours curfew<sup>19</sup> under its cover, the entire leadership of Praja Parishad was arrested as the Government charged that the demonstration was organised and inspired by the Praja Parishad.<sup>20</sup> There was a sharp reaction in the State as well as rest of India.<sup>21</sup> On the intervention of Mr. N.G. Ayyangar, the then Minister of State for India, who visited Jammu



in April 1952 to study the situation and cool passions,<sup>22</sup> they were realised. But it left trail of bitterness.

Meanwhile Mirza Mohd. Afzal Beg the then Chairman of the Basic Principles Committee pointed out in the Constituent Assembly on March 24, 1952 that the State of Jammu and Kashmir would be "an autonomous Republic within the Indian Union, with a separate President, National Assembly, Judiciary, Regional Autonomy and separate citizenship."<sup>23</sup> Beg's statement was deeply resented not only in Jammu but also in Ladakh and rest of India and created serious apprehensions about the credibility of the leaders of Kashmir.

Regional discontent was also growing in Ladakh. In a memorandum submitted to the State Prime Minister Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, Kaushak Bakula, Head Lama of Ladakh and member of the Constituent Assembly, demanded for a statutory provision in the future constitution of Jammu and Kashmir under which state's North-Eastern Frontier Province of Ladakh covering Sinkiang and Western Tibet, would become a federation unit of Kashmir as long as the accession of the state to India endures. He urged that a separate Legislative Assembly of 15 members, with an Executive Council responsible to it, should be set up



for Ladakh to run the internal administration of the area. He pointed out that under that proposal Ladakh would largely bear the same relation to the J&K State as the later did to India. Asserting that under the circumstances Ladakh would have little or no voice in the State's 75 member Constituent Assembly where it was, in point of race, language and culture a perfect stranger to the rest of the members. He claimed that his plan was the best guarantee of the stability of the connections, of Ladakh with Kashmir. In case his plan was not deemed feasible, he added, then a committee of 10 members elected on the jointelectorate basis be set up for Ladakh and no measure affecting the economic, political and religious life of the province be passed by the State Constituent Assembly or the J&K Government without its approval; all proposals emanating from the Statutory Advisory Committee be treated as the "Voice of Ladakh".<sup>24</sup>

Kushak Bukola had a talk with N.G. Ayyangar and repeated the demand that Ladakh be granted internal autonomy. Kashmiri leaders did not take kindly to these regional protests and were particularly provoked by the merger movement of Praja Parishad. Strongly reacting to the Praja Parishad movement Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, in a sensational speech at R.S. Pura on the 10th April 1952, said that



Kashmir's accession to India would be of restrictive nature and those who wanted Kashmir to lose its separate identity were talking without any conception of political realities that faced them.<sup>25</sup> In another speech at Hazratbal on 18th April, 1952, he said that Kashmir is in no way were prepared to renounce their cherished ideology in furtherance of which they had offered blood and sweat during the two decades, Kashmir had acceded to India in respect of only three subjects - Defence, External Affairs and Communication and had the right to shape their destiny according to the wishes of the people. In another speech at Hazratbal of 25th April, 1953 he said that the whole world was aware of their policy that the Constituent Assembly would decide three important issues: framing of the Constitution, the future of the ruling dynasty and the accession of the State.<sup>27</sup> These speeches caused an uproar in Jammu particularly and the Indian Press<sup>28</sup> and public opinion<sup>29</sup> was also agitated.

Meanwhile events were moving fast within the State. The Constituent Assembly unanimously adopted the state flag,<sup>30</sup> the interim report recommending the abolition of hereditary monarchy and the election of the Head of the State was also unanimously approved.<sup>31</sup>



Pt. Prem Nath Dogra said that the decisions of the Constituent Assembly were narrow-sighted and ill-conceived and reflecting one party's ideology that solely comprised the Constituent Assembly.<sup>32</sup> He added that these pronocutive decisions had caused deep resentment, throughout and particularly in the Jammu province.<sup>33</sup> While condemning such decisions, the Praja Parishad pointed out that the people of Jammu be made to cry for self-determination and that the will of the Kashmir valley people could not be forced on the people living outside it.<sup>34</sup> A campaign was then started throughout Jammu province to get 5 lacs of signatures in support of the Memorandum to the President of India.<sup>35</sup>

Officially, a deputation of Kashmiri leaders was summoned in Delhi on 12-6-1952<sup>36</sup> and held a series of discussion. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah also joined them on July 17, 1952.<sup>37</sup> All this resulted in Delhi Agreement, ~~was~~ 1952.<sup>38</sup> The Praja Parishad was of the view that Agreement was another surrender at the alter of communal intransigence and separation of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah "A Fruad of India people and an attack on Indian Constitution."<sup>39</sup> Pt. Prem Nath Dogra declared that Praja Parishad would launch a Satyagrah if the Agreement was enforced."<sup>40</sup>



The parishad movement caused an adverse reaction in Doda District of Jammu also.<sup>41</sup> A section of its inhabitants led by Goni being much agitated,<sup>42</sup> emphasised that as they had peculiar local problems<sup>43</sup> and historically, geographically, culturally were quite different from their neighbouring unit,<sup>44</sup> they could not in any way be attached with the cultural Unit of Jammu.<sup>45</sup> While stressing that it must be given the status of a separate cultural unit,<sup>46</sup> like Jammu and Ladakh, they demanded the state to be divided into as many as five cultural units... Kashmir, Jammu, Poonch, Rajouri, Ladakh and Doda<sup>47</sup> in the future constitutional set up of J&K State. Each such unit, legally, having equal status enjoy autonomy in the conduct of ~~law~~ their internal affairs including maintenance of law and order within their own limits.<sup>48</sup>

The regional tension is also supposed to have provoked prominent Kashmiri leader Mr. G.M. Karra to form the first secessionist party, Political Conference, in Kashmir after 1947.

The State Government lost no time in implementing those provisions of the agreement which aimed at autonomy. Monarchy was abolished,<sup>49</sup> and Yuvraj Karan Singh was elected as Sadar-e-Riyast.<sup>50</sup> Sheikh Abdullah was



accused of ignoring those sections which confirmed Kashmir's ties with India<sup>51</sup> and provided constitutional safeguard for Jammu and Ladakh as agreed by him. Meanwhile differences spread in his Cabinet and the working committee in regard to the interpretation and implementation of the Delhi Agreement. But Sheikh Abdullah pointed out that neither he nor the smallest worker of the National Conference had said one word in violation of the Delhi Agreement.<sup>52</sup>

The Praja Parishad adopted an eight point programme for the acceptance<sup>53</sup> of which it decided to perform Satyagrah. The details of the programme were said to have been finalized by Pt. P.N. Dogra and Dr. S.P. Mukerji at Jullandar during Punjab Jan Sangh Session on Nov.8, 1952. The eight points were:<sup>54</sup>

- i) Full integration of the State into the Indian Union;
- ii) If there was to be limited accession of Kashmir then Jammu and Ladakh should be permitted to integrate fully;
- iii) The Indian Constitution to be applied to the state in full;
- iv) The Supreme Court of India to have a full jurisdiction;
- v) Constituent Assembly to be re-elected in fair election;



- (vi) The custom barriers between Kashmir and India to be eliminated.
- (vii) Kashmir to adhere to the same 'the State, Central and concurrent — lists" of subject as other Indian States and on the other hand Miraz Afzal Beg — leaders of Kashmir.
- (viii) The charges of corruption against the State require to be investigated by an impartial tribunal.

The agitators demanded one President, one flag and one Constitution. Following the arrest of Pt. Prem Nath Dogra and Shah Lal, some top Parishad leaders visited New Delhi where they not only entered into dialogue with the leaders of the like minded political parties<sup>56</sup> but also tried to educate the masses about the happenings in Jammu.<sup>57</sup> In order to win the Hindu support from outside the state and drew the government of India's attention to their cause, the party leadership dubbed Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his National Conference as anti-national, anti-India and incarnate of communalism,<sup>58</sup> the party strongly opposed not only the ideology of Kashmir state as an autonomous State based on the right of self-determination to be exercised through a process of plebiscite but also the limited accession of the State with Indian Union entered by Maharaja Hari Singh — the last king of the Dogra dynasty.<sup>59</sup>



The basic demands for the achievement of which a mass  
Satyagraha was launched in Jammu were:-<sup>60</sup>

- 1x 1. To settle the issue of accession once for all without further leaving it uncertain future;
2. To make it certain as to when the Pak-held Kashmir would be liberated;
3. To clearly and categorically set the Constitutional relationship between the state and the centre with a view to ensure the oneness of India at all costs and, as such, the right of citizenship, jurisdiction of Supreme Court and of the functions of High Court, power of the President, National Planning and financial integration be given a final shape in this relationship; and
4. To investigate by appointing an impartial Commission the grievances of the people of Jammu regarding their economic advancement, employment, rehabilitation, division of board districts on communal lines.

While leveling charges against Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, the Parishad leaders pointed out that he made minimised the state in the name of secularism; launched utilitarianism in the name of democracy; crushed civil liberties, making efforts for carving out an independent Kashmir, betraying Central Govt., and creating situations which would elevate the state to the status of sovereign state. With its independence guaranteed by the People's Republic of China and USSR besides India and Pakistan.<sup>61</sup>



Other issues raised up against Sheikh Abdullah related to the gerimendering of Hindu majority areas for election purposes; making Urdu compulsory subject for all; distribution of key posts among Muslims and sacrificing the interests of non-Muslims.<sup>62</sup> Thus Sheikh Abdullah was charged with anti-national tendencies, taking away Kashmir from India. Even one of his Cabinet Ministers Shahlal Saraf was encouraged to oppose Sheikh Abdullah for his making highly inflammable public speeches and for authoritarian attitude in the Cabinet. He resigned from the Cabinet saying that "I hold my post as a trust from the people, especially the minority communities to which I happen to belong, and it becomes my duty not to betray this trust at a moment of crisis."<sup>63</sup> Thus by December 1952 the whole of Jammu province was ablaze. The agitation had assumed into formidable dimensions. The agitators were met with arrests and punishments. The Praja Parishad had full moral and material sympathy from the Hindus all over the Country. It had unflinching support of national parties like Jana Sangh, Communist Party of India, Ram Rajya Parishad, Hindu Maha Sabha, etc. The leaders of these parties even courted arrests in support of the Parishad in protest in Jammu. It was during these days that S.P. Mukerjee was authorised by his Jana Sangh Party either to seeking redress of the grievance of the Jammu people or to launch a Satyagraha movement in India in support of the agitation.



The movement therefore, assumed serious proportions and its repercussion were also felt outside the state. Anti Kashmiri feelings in Jammu developed anti-Muslim overtones, while anti-Jammu reactions in the valley tended to become anti-Hindu and hostile to rest of the Country.<sup>64</sup> Finally the three parties of India - Jana Sangh, Ram Rajya Parishad and Hindu Maha Sabha - came together in a bid to organise the movement in Delhi proper.<sup>65</sup> Dr. S.P. Mukerjee entered into a long correspondence with Pt. Nehru and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah but nothing substantial came out. At later stage Dr. Mukerjee even went to the extent of accepting Delhi Agreement of 1952 to withdraw the agitation provided all Praja Parishad workers were released and its leaders were invited to a Conference. But even this offer was not responded.<sup>66</sup> Finally, he offered a ten-points formula for the withdrawal of the Praja Parishad movement. The 10 - points were:-

- 1) The movement is withdrawn;
- 2) Order for the release of prisoners is given and there will be no victimisation;
- 3) You and Sheikh Abdullah call a Conference ... where all political and constitutional matters are discussed with an open mind;
- 4) Both parties reiterate that the unity of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will be maintained and that the principle of autonomy will apply to the Province of Jammu as a whole and of course also to Ladakh and Kashmir Valley;



- (5) The new Constitution to come into force as soon as possible and elections to take place with, say, six months;
- (6) Question of flag is to be clarified and Indian flag should be in use every day just as it done in all other parts of India;
- (7) Implementation of the July agreement will be made at the next session of Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly ... In respect of fundamental rights, citizenship, Supreme Court, President's powers, financial integration in the conduct of elections provisions of Indian Constitution will apply. Exceptions, however, may be made with regard to conditions for the acquisition of land;
- (8) The terms of reference of the Commission of Enquiry will be widened and all grievances will be examined by it;.
- (9) The Commission now includes 4 persons, Chief Justice, Accountant General, Chief Conservator of Forests and Revenue Commissioner ... They can hardly inspire confidence. The Commission should be reconstituted with 2 Judges from India and the Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir ...; and
- (10) Regarding finality of accession and other political matters the Conference will consider these points from every aspect and agreement sought to be reached will be to the best interests of India including Jammu and Kashmir.



Neither Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru nor Sheikh Abdullah responded to Dr. S.P. Mukerjee's final offer to withdraw the agitation. Meanwhile the agitation was growing in its intensity. "Volunteers from the East Punjab and Delhi poured into Jammu and courted arrests as locals ... Dr. S.P. Mukerjee, founder President of All India Jana Sangh who crossed the Madhupora Bridge on May 8, 1953 in defiance of a ban was arrested and placed under house arrest in Srinagar".<sup>68</sup> Since Dr. Mukerjee wanted to fight his case in the Supreme Court, the State Government did not allow him to do so, arguing that his arrest was under the Public Safety Act.<sup>69</sup> The arrest of Dr. S.P. Mukerjee tremendously added fuel to the fire. The Praja Parishad movement took such a serious turn that it almost paralysed the entire state apparatus. Almost all parts of Jammu region viz. Chhamb, Ranbir Singh Pura, Sunderbani, Samba, Akhnoor, Jourian, Kisthwar, Bhadarwa, Udhampur, Basohli, Hiranagar, Reasi etc., were vibrant with mass upsurge. Lathi-charges on processions had become a normal feature of life. Number of people were also killed or injured by police firing in the above mentioned places.<sup>70</sup>

A chain of multiple reaction had followed. Sheikh Abdullah's attitude towards Jammu, the agitation of the Praja Parishad, the role of its sympathetic organisations in India, its reactions in the valley and their counter-



reaction in India, ~~px~~ the planned process of precipitating a conflict between 'Kashmiri Nationalism' and 'Dogra-Nationalism' and Ladakh and Doda's demand for internal autonomy had erected conditions favourable for the disintegration of the state and disruption of the Unity of its people.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, the relation between the two governments (Govt. of India and the Govt. of J&K) and the opposition groups in the state further deteriorated. Sheikh Abdullah was prepared to make some concessions to the separatists in Jammu and Ladakh. The Basic Principle Committee of the Constituent Assembly was thus instructed to study the idea of extending autonomy to each province of the State. The State C.A. was therefore, busy in drafting the constitution on a fully Democratic basis.<sup>72</sup>

The broad outlines had been drawn up and discussed at length by the working committee of National Conference in 2nd week of May 1953.<sup>73</sup> The Committee asserted again that the relationship of the State with Indian Union would be based on the instrument of Accession of 1947, Art. 370 and Indo-Kashmir Agreement of 1952. It was further proposed that the State would be divided into five units on cultural and linguistic line, each unit enjoying certain measures of autonomy strictly relating to internal administration.<sup>74</sup>



According to one version .... the scheme of regional autonomy was on the following lines - "Three provinces namely Kashmir, Jammu and Poonch-Rajouri were to have each as executive head, a Council of Ministers responsible to the Provincial Legislatures. As far as Ladakh and Gilgit matters, they were proposed to be administered by Regional Councils. Authority might be given under the State Constitution to the State legislatures to increase or decrease the area of these autonomous units or ~~est~~ establish new units.<sup>75</sup>

Broad casting from Radio Kashmir, Srinagar on April 17th, 1953, the State Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah said,<sup>76</sup> "We have decided to give autonomy to the different cultural units of the state as will be provided in the Constitution that is being drawn up. This will remove all the fears of domination of one unit over the other and will make for the voluntary union of the people of the state."<sup>77</sup>

Joseph Karbel mentioned the cultural units as "The valley, Jammu, Gilgit, Ladakh and ~~region~~ region consisting of the districts of Mirpur, Rajouri, Poonch and Muzzafrabad."<sup>78</sup>

The ideas seemed to be that a measure of autonomy in their internal affairs, would remove the ~~fears~~ fears of each of these units and would provide a moral natural and communal impetus for a sense of belonging and political



participation. Such a sense of belonging alone could effectively counter the appeal for secession in the valley or of communalism in Jammu - "only this can ensure their unity and contribute to the development of a sentiment of genuine Indian Nationshood in this vital part of the Country."<sup>79</sup>

We, thus, find that certain forces within and outside the state interacted and caused some sort of polarisation among the various stand-points. The Jammu interactionists were never completely reconciled to the State's accession to India in the three subjects along the special status of Kashmir under article 370 of the Constitution of India, the Delhi Agreement of 1952 and even the proposal to give autonomy to the different cultural units of the state were unacceptable to the Praja Parishad. Their search for security induced them to agitate for a highly unified Constitution with one Constitution, one President and one Flag for the whole of the country. The formation of the separate Constituent Assembly for the State, its own Sadar-i-Riyasat as the head, a separate emblem and a separate flag were, therefore, counter to their concept of a strong centre.

The stands of even the national level parties happened to be confused and contributed to uncertainty about the shape of things to come. All this created a sharp reaction and uncertainty in Kashmir.



Pakistan, on the other hand, while taking advantage of this new situation tried to misinterpret the then emerging public opinion on Kashmir as chauvinistic and to exploit the parochial sentiments of the Dogra Nationalism as well as the religious feelings of the Kashmiris. This was intended to intensify their sense of insecurity and to create doubts in their minds as to whether India would stay secularist after Nehru's death.

All this created political instability, suspense, uncertainty and economic stress. There was also an apprehension that the Kashmiri leaders might get alienated from the popular support in the valley and therefore they started adopting more assertive attitude.

Under these compelling circumstances Working Committee of the National Conference appointed 8 member committee, in May 1953,<sup>80</sup> to explore avenues of an honourable settlement of the accession issue.<sup>65</sup> The Sub-committee, at its final session, held on 9th June 1953 adopted the following proposals as possible alternatives for an honourable and peaceful solution of the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan.<sup>81</sup>

- a) Overall plebiscite with conditions as detailed in the minutes of the meeting dated 4.6.1953.
- b) Independence of the whole state with joint Indo-Pak control of foreign affairs and defence.
- c) Dixon Plan with independence for the plebiscite area.



Then followed a period of studied inactivity and deliberate side-tracking of the main issue completing the Constitution.<sup>82</sup> Vehemently criticising Praja Parishad movement Pt. Nehru said:-

"According to my thinking the agitation of Praja Parishad ~~Movement~~ in Jammu is not only communal but is supported by communal and narrow minded elements in India. I have not a shadow of doubt that if the narrow approach was adopted in our country as a whole, it would bring disaster in its train not only for the Jammu and Kashmir State but also to the larger interests of India. Behaving this as I do, the only course that I can follow is to resist this utterly misconceived agitation, that is our government's opinion and they propose to adhere to it and ~~persue~~ that policy."<sup>83</sup>

~~Meanwhile~~ by the sudden death of Dr. S.P. Mukerjee, the President of the Akhil Bharatiya Jana Sangh and the leader of the opposition in the Indian Parliament, on 23rd June, 1953, in detention at Srinagar, the whole of North India was plunged in profound grief and submerged by a kind of anti-Nehru and Anti-Abdullah wave. Praja Parishad refused to believe that death occurred in natural circumstances.<sup>84</sup> It was described as death in mysterious circumstances. The rumblings of similar reaction were also heard in the frontier district of Ladakh.



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But while explaining his innocence in this matter, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah pointed out:

"Dr. Mukerjee was a friend of mine and I had a great regard for him. Bakashi Ghulam Mohd. held the portfolio of Home Affairs and Sham Lal Saraf the portfolio of Health and Jails ... I could establish contact with Dr. Mukerjee only through them. I did not even get authentic reports about his health from these people and I received the news of his death quite unexpectedly one morning."<sup>85</sup>

However, as a mark of respect to the departed soul, Pt. Prem Nath Dogra, the then President of Praja Parishad, called off the agitation for thirteen days to express grief and sorrow and announced that there would be no meetings and processions during this period. The postponement of the movement at the same time gave a breathing time both to the government of India and the state government to find out some solution of the problem.<sup>86</sup>

There also abruptly occurred a change in the attitude of the Pt. Nehru as well as Congress government. Many Parishad leaders including Pt. Prem Nath Dogra were released. For the first time Pt. Nehru realised that large number of people of Jammu had suffered and that "whatever our Countrymen suffer, we share to some extent, that suffering." In an appeal Pt. Nehru advised the Praja Parishad to end the conflict and return to the normal ways of peaceful and constructive politics.<sup>87</sup>



But with the death of Dr. S.P. Mukerjee, the Praja Parishad movement also died away. On July 7, 1953, the party officially announced that the agitation was called off with the hope that the grievances of the people of Jammu would be redressed and their demands met. No sooner did the Praja Parishad make this announcement than the state government order for release of all persons and detenues of all parties involved in the movement.

While concluding I may point out that the All Jammu and Kashmir Praja Parishad which mostly represented the Hindu dominated belt of Jammu region, was never completely reconciled to the State's accession to Indian Union in three subjects along with its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution of India, The Delhi Agreement of 1952 and even the proposal to give autonomy to the different cultural units of the State were also unacceptable to its leadership. Their search for security induced them to agitate for highly unified constitution with one Constitution, one President and one flag for the whole of the Country. The formation of the separate Constituent Assembly for the State its separate Constitution, its own Sadar-i-Riyasat as the head, a separate emblem and a separate flag were therefore, counter to their concept of 'Akhand Bharat.'

The Praja Parishad movement was, also a protest against the valley based leadership which enjoyed political power and the special status under Article 370 of the Constitution of India and Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, who was dubbed



as Communist and whose main political objective said to be to carve out Kashmir state and an independent state. They also believed that his government was discriminatory in character and his administrative set up was an anathema for Hindus and as such his exist was strongly desired. The Congress leadership at the Centre as well as in the State, on the other hand, was of the view that Praja Parishad movement had created not only conflicts of ideas and interests among the masses of different regions but also doubts among the Muslim population of the State about their own future and the future of Indian secularism after Pt. Nehru. Even Pt. Nehru in his speech in Lok Sabha on August 10, 1953 said that "the unfortunate ~~ex~~ agitation had sought to undermine the basic position and had created not only confusion but also powerful reaction especially in the Valley of Kashmir." The other Congress leaders believed that Parishad movement had not only adverse effects on the minds of Kashmiris but also alienated them from mainstream of Indian nationalism.

In a way we may say the Parishad movement of 1952-53 was, a protest of the people of Jammu region against Kashmiri Chauvinism. But the demands, the Parishad had voiced during the course of its agitation remained almost untouched. The Kashmir state could not be totally integrated with the Indian Union. Art. 370 of the Constitution of India could not be abrogated and the state still enjoys the special status. Even the slogans, of Plebiscite and recession are still being raised from different parts of the Valley.



In fact the Praja Parishad movement had increased the frustration of the people of Jammu region and in order to give vent to their frustration they not only burst into agitation from time to time but also put the state on political convulsion.

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